

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### RICHARDS BAY MINERALS, ON-SITE RENEWABLE PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) ENERGY PROJECT ON PORTION 0 OF ERF 13130 LOT K45 AND PORTION 0 OF ERF 16317 RBM, RICHARDS BAY, KWAZULU NATAL.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT AND INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

21 MAY 2021

### 1. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this document is to:

- Provide background information to parties interested in and/or affected by the proposed development.
- Provide information of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Process to be followed for the proposed Richards Bay Minerals onsite renewable PV energy project in Richards Bay, King Cetshwayo District Municipality in KwaZulu Natal.
- Indicate how you, as an Interested and Affected Party (I&AP), can become involved in the EIA process.

### 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Richards Bay Minerals is planning on developing a solar panel farm as an alternative renewable source of energy for on-site consumption in the King Cetshwayo District Municipality Richards Bay, KwaZulu Natal.

Exigent Engineering Consultants CC has been appointed to oversee the legislative environmental processes applicable to the proposed development. The proposed project involves the development of photovoltaic facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity of approximately 22 megawatts for an onsite solution. The development of the Solar Farm aims to harvest solar energy as an alternative source of renewable energy for Richards Bay Minerals.

Depending on the PV panel arrangements selected, the PV arrays could be up to 3m high. The tallest component on the site will be the operations and maintenance buildings as well as any centralized inverter stations, which will have a maximum height of four to five meters.

### 3. PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed development site is located on the property of Richards Bay Minerals bordering the eastern site of the RBM main site in Richards Bay, KwaZulu Natal. The proposed development is to be constructed within the property of RBM, Portion 0 of Erf 13130 LOT K45 and Portion 0 of Erf 16317 RBM. This site is suitable for the location of a PV array of up to 22.5MWp.

The proposed solar farm site is located within the quarter degree grid cell 2832CA and has the geographic coordinates at 28°41' 15.49,61"S and 32°08' 7,76"E and an approximate extent of 36,7 Ha.

### 4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PROCESS - LEGAL FRAMEWORK

An Environmental Authorisation application will be submitted to the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) in terms of the EIA Regulations published in Government Notice No. R. 982 of 2014, under Section 24(5), and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA) 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998), as amended, of the intent to carry out the EIA Process (in terms of listed activity 1 of Listing Notice 2 – GN R984, as amended). A Water Use Licence Application will be submitted to the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (DHSWS) in terms of the applicable activities listed in Section 21 of the National Water Act (NWA), (Act 36 of 1998).

#### GN R984, as amended - NEMA Environmental Impact Assessment Listing Notice 2:

**Activity 1:** *The development of facilities or infrastructure for the generation of electricity from a renewable resource where the electricity output is 20 megawatts or more, excluding where such development of facilities or infrastructure is for*

photovoltaic installations and occurs (a) Within an urban area or; (b) On existing infrastructure

## **5. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

It is anticipated that the following environmental aspects will be significant and will hence be addressed by the project team during the assessment process:

- Visual Impact
- Land Use Transformation
- Impacts on Water Resources
- Electromagnetic Interference

Management guidelines will be developed for the above-mentioned issues and incorporated in an Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).

You are welcome to comment on the above list and provide additional anticipated issues and possible impacts that should be assessed.

## **6. SPECIALISTS**

The project team has identified potentially significant issues and will further assess these impacts in terms of their significance in accordance with the guidelines for EIA published by the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA).

The specialist studies that will be conducted include:

- Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment
- Landscape Solar Assessment
- Aquatic Biodiversity Assessment

The Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA) or other stakeholders may request additional specialists' studies if necessary.

## **7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

Public Participation is any process that involves the public in problem solving or decision-making and forms an integral part of the EIA. The Public Participation Process (PPP) provides people who may be affected by the proposed development, with an opportunity to provide comments and to raise issues

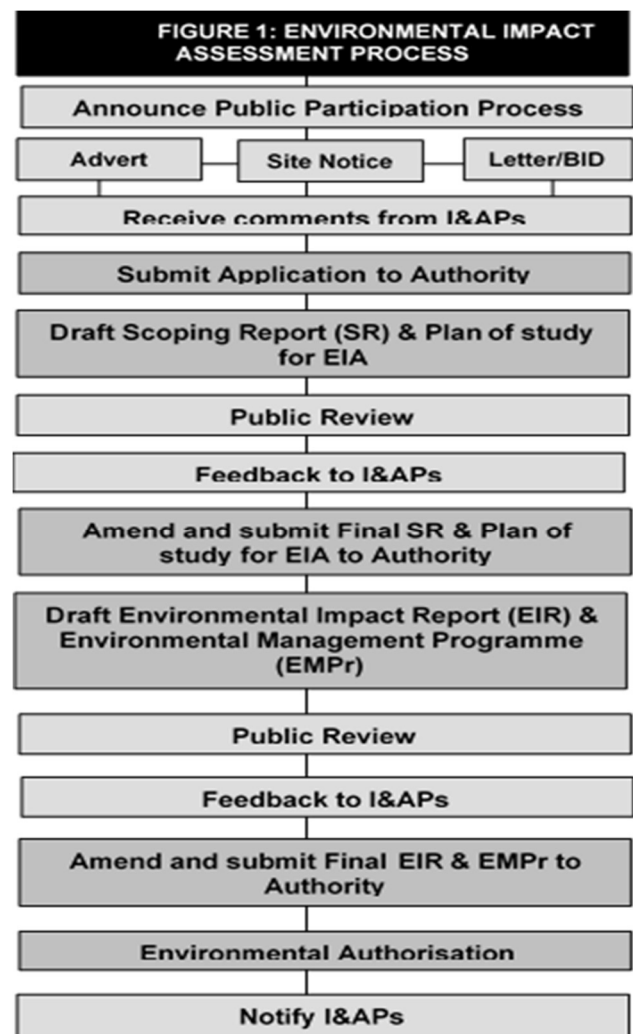
of concern, or to make suggestions that may result in enhanced benefits for the project.

Comments and issues raised during the PPP will be captured, evaluated and included in a Comments and Response Report, which will be incorporated into the BAR. The draft BAR and draft EMPr will be made available for public review prior to submission to the environmental authority.

## **8. APPROVING AUTHORITY**

The KwaZulu Natal DEDTEA is the relevant authority which will review the BAR. The DEDTEA must reach a decision as to whether, and under what conditions, the project may proceed, based on environmental considerations.

The process to be followed is depicted in Figure 1 as per the amended 2014 NEMA regulations.



The DHSWS is the relevant authority which will review the IWULA. A decision on the application will be made by DHSWS based on content which will be provided in the IWULA and the supporting documents.

## **9. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

Exigent Engineering Consultants has been appointed by Richards Bay Minerals to manage and facilitate the environmental process and PPP required for the project.

We would like to encourage you to participate in this EIA process. Should you wish to get involved, please provide written comments on or before **24 June 2021**.

### **EXIGENT ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS**

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Figure 2. Locality Map

